Automation in sugar Mills

567. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce new procedure of automation in Indian Sugar Mills;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the energy likely to be saved and the production likely to be increased by adopting the new procedure of automation; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) and (b) There is no proposal at present for introduction of new procedure of automation in Indian Sugar Mills. However, the Government of India has approved a Mission Mode Project on Sugar Production Technologies to be implemented by the Department of Science & Technology with the financial assistance from the Sugar Development Fund operated by the Ministry of Food. Under this Project, to start with 30 sugar factories in different parts of the country will be identified for technological upgradation and to demonstrate to the financially weak units, the techno-economic viability of modernisation, This Project is to be completed in a period of 5 years.

(c) and (d) The technological upgradation in the above sugar factories is likely to help in saving of energy and the production capacity is also likely to be increased by adopting modern technology and equipment. It is not possible at this stage to assess exactly the likely energy saving and production increase on account of the above as it will vary from factory to factory depending upon the equipments installed.

Hike in the issue price of wheat

568. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided for a hike in the Central issue price of wheat; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor and the details of the proposed hike?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) and (b) The Central issue price (ex-FCI godowns) of wheat is revised by the Government from time to time to partially absorb the hike in Minimum Support Price and handling costs of Food Corporation of India. The prevailing Central issue price of wheat is Rs. 402/-per quintal.

Annual destruction of Foodgrains and crops

569. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) what is the estimated annual destruction of foodgrains and crops in the country by field rats; and

(b) what measures have been taken so far to save the foodgrains and crops from being devoured by the field rats?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) No precise and reliable estimate on annual destruction of foodgrains and crops in country by field rats is available on all-India basis.

(b) The measures taken by the Government to save the foodgrains and crops from being devoured by the field rats is given in the enclosed statement.